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Mayor*

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



*Chris Ryer
Director*

February 12, 2019

REQUEST: Incorporate Two-Story Historic Carriage Houses into a New Six-Story Mixed-Use Building

ADDRESS: 1012-1020 Morton Street (Mount Vernon Historic District)

PETITIONER(S): Howard Chambers, Owner
Chris Pfaeffle, Architect

STAFF: Caitlin Audette

RECOMMENDATION: Conditional Approval

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Area: The Mount Vernon Historic District encompasses roughly 40 blocks surrounding Mount Vernon Place. The contributing buildings within the district include a diversity of styles and building types including mansions, apartments, offices, and religious structures. The period of significance for the Mount Vernon Historic District extends from 1810 to 1945.

Site Conditions: The subject area is composed of four two-story carriage houses of varying heights. The carriage houses are located in the middle of the block on the west side of Morton Street between Eager Street to the south and Chase Street to the north. The rears of these properties front onto Deab Alley. These buildings are part of a set of eight carriage houses that make up the buildings fronting on Morton Street. The carriage houses are all contributing to the historic district in the Mount Vernon Guidelines for New Construction.

The buildings were purpose-built as carriage houses in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Following the shift in transportation technology, the buildings were converted to automobile uses by the early twentieth century. This area of Mount Vernon was a hub of the auto service industry in Baltimore at the time and this block was no different as the buildings on Morton Street all housed various auto service needs include car dealerships, auto repair shops, and garages. By the 1950s these uses had largely moved out of Mount Vernon and the buildings housed warehouses and laboratories. In the 1980s, the buildings were reimagined as locations for creative and retail uses including an art gallery, dance studio, architecture studio, clothing store, and salon. These uses have varied. Today, 1012 Morton Street is home to a cross fit studio and 1018-1020 is a garage. The other buildings do not have current tenants. A result of the continuous change in use is that the interiors of the buildings appear to have been extensively modified since their construction.

1012 Morton Street – This two-story carriage house is three bays wide and features a painted brick façade capped by a simple brick cornice over-layed with a half-round gutter. The first floor includes a recessed entry and a one-over-one window. The second floor includes a large central window flanked by one-over-one windows. All of the building openings feature painted brick segmental arch lintels and cast stone sills. The rear elevation has a common bond brick pattern, and has been extensively modified; only one existing opening appearing to be historic. Large double-leaf steel doors are located in what was likely a garage/carriage entrance and three modern windows are on the second floor. The remaining historic detail is a corbelled cornice which is partially covered by a modern gutter.

1014 Morton Street – The two-story brown brick carriage house features a highly decorative façade with a deep cornice capped by a tiered parapet. The doors and windows feature painted decorative cast stone sills and lintels with an arch at the garage doors. A brick Juliet balcony is set at the southernmost window on the second floor. The rear of the building retains the historic carriage door opening, although it has been infilled with a transom, siding, and a metal pedestrian door. A third floor extends above the original elevation at the southwest corner of the rear elevation, which is not visible from the Morton Street elevation. Based on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the addition appears to date to the mid-twentieth century.

1016 Morton Street – The building is a two-story, three-bay painted brick carriage house. The northern bay of the first floor appears to have historically housed a slim pedestrian entrance that has been bricked in. The remaining windows and door feature segmentally arched lintels. The facade is topped with a decorative cornice. The openings on the first story of the rear elevation have been bricked in. A new steel door is located in a modern punched-in opening. The central second floor window openings appear to be historic.

1018-1020 Morton Street – Historically a double carriage house, the six-bay building has been extensively modified, most notably with a concrete veneer. Two garage doors are located on the first floor along with three non-original multi-lite steel windows. The steel windows are also on the second floor within modified window openings. A historic cornice caps the building, and a brick vertical addition rises a half story above the intact cornice at the southeast corner of the building. The rear of the building retains more integrity, with a corbelled cornice, painted brick, and intact openings with sills and lintels.

BACKGROUND

- 1994 – 1016 Morton Street: Staff approved the replacement of the non-historic windows, installation of transoms and repainting of front elevation.
- 2002 – 1012-1020 Morton Street: Staff approved painting or repointing and cleaning on all facades and installation of new lighting and signage. (under current ownership)
- 2005 – 1012-1020 Morton Street: The property owner proposed the demolition of the buildings for a new condominium building. The owner pulled the item immediately prior to the hearing. (under current ownership)
- May 9, 2006 – At a CHAP Working Session, the commission discussed the proposal from the current owner to demolish 1018-1020 Morton Street, demolish the rear of 1014 and 1016 Morton Street, and rehabilitate 1012 Morton Street. The commission

found that all four properties were contributing to the historic district, though no vote took place. The applicant did not move forward with the proposal.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes the demolition of the rears of 1012-1020 Morton Street to allow for the construction of a new six-story addition (four-stories above the historic two-story buildings.) The addition will extend above 1014-1020 Morton Street, to allow for windows on all four sides of the building and potential balconies above 1012 Morton Street. The facades and first 15'-0" of the historic buildings would be retained and rehabilitated. The proposal includes ground floor retain along Morton Street, 16 parking spaces at the first floor, and 65 units in the upper floors.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

CHAP staff applied *Chapter 2: Design Guidelines for Additions, New Construction, and Non-Contributing Buildings*. These were used rather than the Mount Vernon Design Guidelines for New Construction as the Mount Vernon Guidelines specifically state the following, "These guidelines are not to be used for additions to contributing and noncontributing buildings and structures."

- The proposed building is approximately 80'-0", this is within the height limit for the area of 140'-0".
- *Guideline 2.1 Guiding Principles for New Design:*
 - The proposed building will require the demolition of the rear of the four historic carriage house buildings, as only a 15'-0" deep portion of the historic buildings is proposed for retention. While the interiors of the buildings have been modified since their construction, the rear of the buildings along Deab Alley retain integrity as utilitarian brick elevations.
 - The guidelines states "Design new buildings to visually relate to the historic environment. Respect the established design precedent in the immediate area." The proposed addition will extend four stories above the historic buildings. The immediate area includes two-story carriage houses along Morton Street, large scale four-story rowhouses along Charles and Chase Streets (approximately 53'-0"), the mid-rise Chase House (approximately 180'-0"), two and four-story office buildings at Chase Street, large-scale three story buildings on Eager Street, and three-story rowhouses on Cathedral.
- *Guideline 2.2 Site Design:*
 - The proposed new construction is set back 15'-0" from the facades of the two-story carriage houses along Morton Street. This is unusual as no other buildings in the vicinity have a tiered or setback massing, though there are a wide variety of heights within one block.
- *Guideline 2.3 Scale and Form:*
 - This guideline states, "The scale and form of new buildings must be compatible with the height and depth of surrounding buildings. Where there is variation of building height within the immediate neighborhood, the new building should generally relate to the predominate pattern." The proposed six-story building is significantly larger than the other buildings that front Morton Street. However, Chase House, a 17-story building on Cathedral Street is directly opposite Deab

Alley. The four-story rowhouses at Charles and Chase are approximately 53' in height.

- More information is needed to understand how the floor-to-floor heights of the proposed building will relate to the floor-to-floor heights of the surrounding historic buildings.
- The proposed flat roof is compatible with the surrounding flat roofs.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Mount Vernon ARC was informed of the proposal. No response has been provided to CHAP staff at this time.

ANALYSIS

CHAP staff finds that the proposed mass and scale of the new construction generally meets the design guidelines. However, the setback of the proposed vertical addition should be studied as a larger setback may be more appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends concept approval of the mass and scale with the following conditions. Setback evaluation by architect and owner should return to the full commission for review and approval.

- The architect explores deeper setbacks that more clearly demonstrate that the two building components (historic façades, and new vertical mass) are visually dissociated, when viewed from Morton Street.
- The architect provides information on how the rehabilitation of the retained portions of the buildings would be completed considering potential issues of floor-to-floor heights, etc.



Eric Holcomb
Director

MAP AND IMAGES



Image 1– Aerial view of 1012-1020 Morton Street as seen from east.

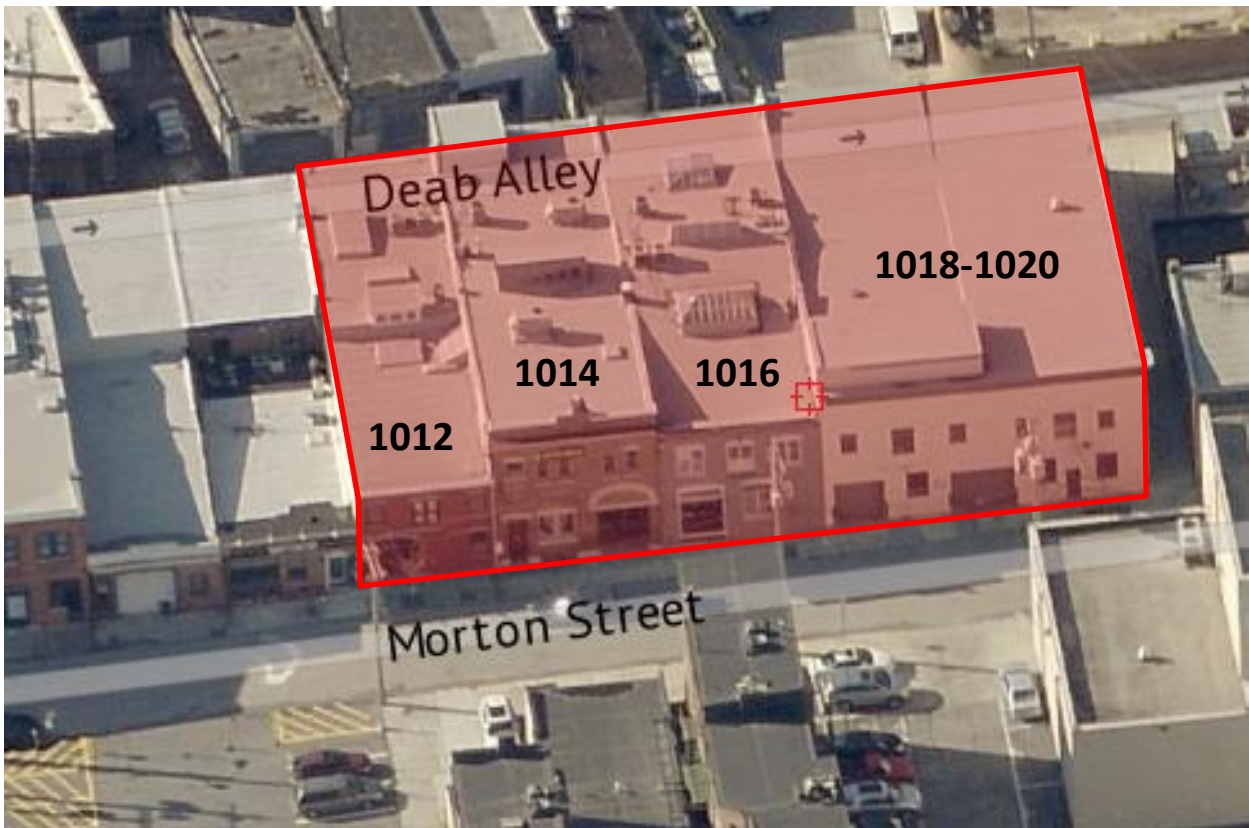


Image 2: Detail Aerial view of 1012-1020 Morton Street



Image 3: 1012 Morton Street



Image 4: 1014 Morton Street



Image 5: 1016 Morton Street



Image 5: 1018-1020 Morton Street



Image 6: View of other properties on Morton Street looking southwest



Image 7: View looking north on Morton Street



Image 8: View of properties in question looking north



Image 9: View of other properties on Morton Street looking north west

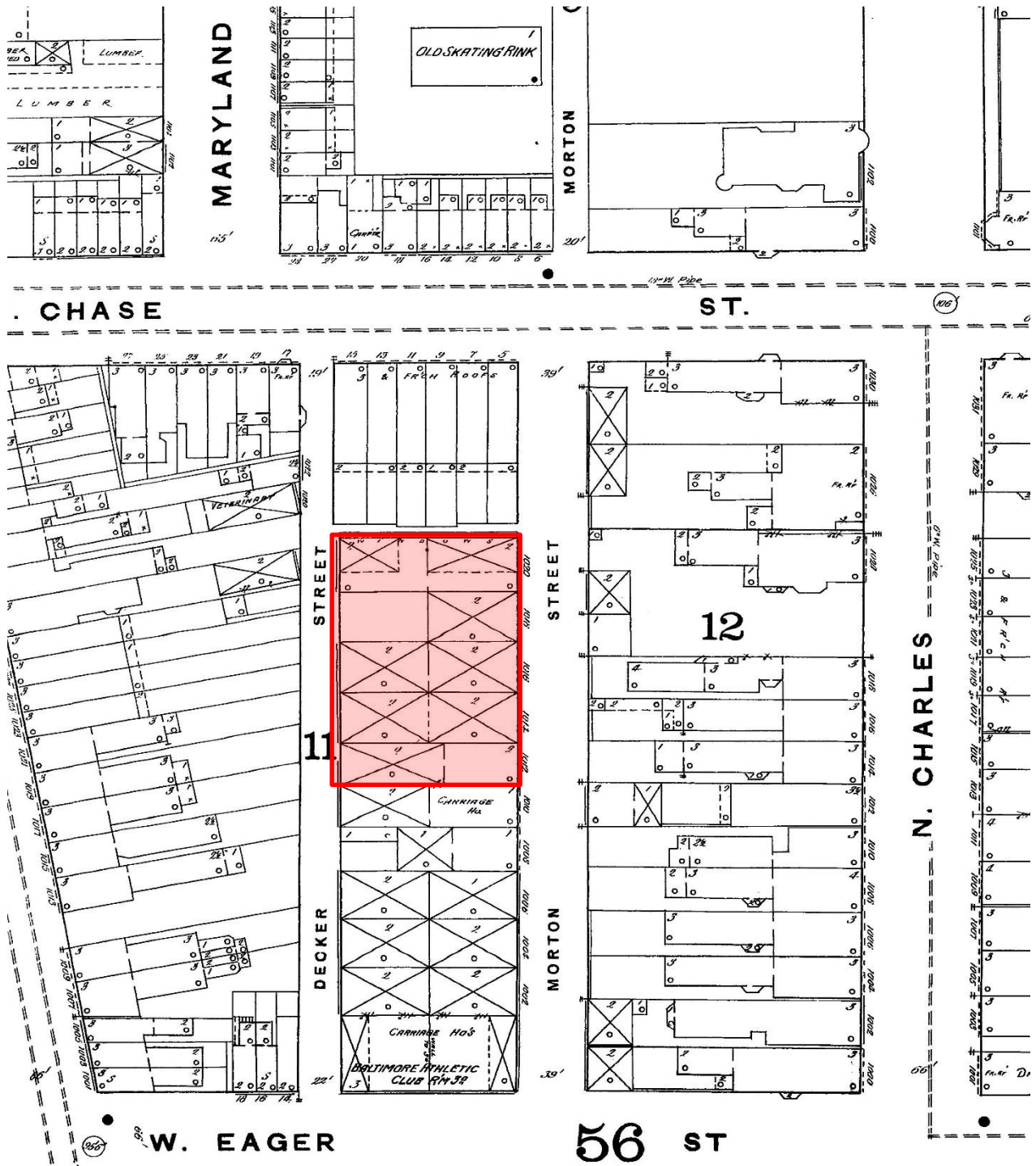


Image 10: 1890 Sanborn Map

